



Trace Evidence (Hair Samples)

Information Paper

To provide information to submitting agencies on proper collection and packaging techniques for head and pubic hair standards.

Massachusetts State Police
Crime Laboratory

Phone: 508-358-3110
Fax: 508-358-3111

Excellence in Service Through Quality Forensic Science

Collection of Head and Pubic Hair Standards

Contact Information

For Scene Response

GHQ: 508-820-2121

Technical Questions

Trace Unit: 508-358-3110

Evidence Submission

Appointments

Evidence Unit: 508-358-3155

Special Packaging Information:

- **Do Not Package Any Trace Evidence in Plastic.**
- **This includes hairs, fibers, paint chips, glass or any other non-biological items, such as tape, that may contain Trace materials.**



General Considerations

For microscopic examination of hairs, the Crime Laboratory must receive an appropriate standard that represents the characteristics present in the individual's head and/or pubic hair. Both combings and plucked hairs must be collected from the individual according to these guidelines:

Medical personnel, investigators, technicians, or the individual himself/herself may collect the hair standards. An officer must be present if the individual collects his/her own standards to guarantee the integrity of the exemplars.

Head Hair Procedures

Combing

To perform a combing, place a clean sheet of paper on the table in front of the individual. Use a clean, fine-toothed comb to comb the individual's entire head, allowing fallen hairs to collect on the paper. Place the comb on the paper and fold the paper to enclose both the comb and hairs. Label the paper fold "Combed Head Hair" and place into a paper envelope. Label the envelope with the words "Combed Head Hair," the individual's name, date of collection, and the name or initials of both the collector and the officer observing the collection.

Plucking

To perform a plucking, manually divide the individual's hair into five sections: front, top, back, right side and left side. Collect approximately 20 hairs from each section in a similar manner, labeling each section (front, top, back, right side and left side). Gloves may be used to grasp individual hairs between the forefinger and the thumb. The hairs should be held as close to the scalp as possible. Using quick force, pluck the hairs from the scalp and place into a paper fold. Label the paper fold with the location and place into a paper envelope. Seal the envelope and label with the location, individual's name, date of collection and the name or initials of both the collector and the observing officer. Use this method to pluck hairs from each of the five areas. A **minimum** of 100 head hairs should be plucked.

Pubic Hair Procedures

Combing

To perform a combing, place a clean sheet of paper on a chair. The individual must undress to reveal his/her pubic area. Instruct the individual to sit on the paper-lined chair and use a clean, fine-toothed comb to comb the area, allowing fallen hairs to collect on the paper. Place the comb on the paper and fold to enclose both the comb and the hairs. Label the paper fold "Combed Pubic Hair" and place into a paper envelope. Label the envelope with the words "Combed Pubic Hair," the individual's name, date of collection, and the name or initials of both the collector and the officer observing the collection.

Plucking

To perform a plucking, grasp individual hairs close to the skin and use a quick force to pluck pubic hairs from many different regions in the individual's pubic area. Place the hairs onto a sheet of paper and fold the paper to enclose the hairs. Label the fold "Pulled Pubic hairs" and place into a paper envelope. Seal and label the envelope with the words "Pulled Pubic Hair," the individual's name, date of collection, and the name or initials of both the collector and the officer observing the collection. Use this method to pluck hairs from many different regions. A **minimum** of 40 pubic hairs should be plucked.